

# Case Incident 1

## The Upside of Anger?

A researcher doing a case study on emotions in organizations interviewed Laura, a 22-year-old customer service representative in Australia. Below is a summary of the interview (with some paraphrasing of the interviewer questions):

Interviewer: How would you describe your workplace?

Laura: *Very cold, unproductive, [a] very, umm, cold environment, atmosphere.*

Interviewer: What kinds of emotions are prevalent in your organization?

Laura: *Anger, hatred towards other people, other staff members.*

Interviewer: So it seems that managers keep employees in line using fear tactics?

Laura: *Yeah. [The General Manager's] favorite saying is, "Nobody's indispensable." So, it's like, "I can't do that because I'll get sacked!"*

Interviewer: How do you survive in this situation?

Laura: *You have to cater your emotions to the sort of situation, the specific situation . . . because it's just such a hostile environment, this is sort of the only way you can survive.*

Interviewer: Are there emotions you have to hide?

Laura: *Managers don't like you to show your emotions . . . They don't like to show that there is anything wrong or anything emotional in the working environment.*

Interviewer: Why do you go along?

Laura: *I feel I have to put on an act because . . . to show your true emotions, especially towards my managers [Laura names two of her senior managers], it would be hatred sometimes. So, you just can't afford to do that because it's your job and you need the money.*

Interviewer: Do you ever rebel against this system?

Laura: *You sort of put on a happy face just so you can annoy [the managers]. I find that they don't like people being happy, so you just annoy them by being happy. So, yeah. It just makes you laugh. You just "put it on" just because you know it annoys [management]. It's pretty vindictive and manipulative but you just need to do that.*

Interviewer: Do you ever find that this gets to you?

Laura: *I did care in the beginning and I think it just got me into more trouble. So now I just tell myself, "I don't care." If you tell yourself something for long enough, eventually you believe it. Yeah, so now I just go "Oh well."*

Interviewer: Do you intend to keep working here?

*Laura: It's a means to an end now. So every time I go [to work] and every week I just go, "Well, one week down, one week less until I go away." But if I knew that I didn't have this goal, I don't know if I could handle it, or if I would even be there now.*

Interviewer: Is there an upside to working here?

*Laura: I'm so much better at telling people off now than I ever used to be. I can put people in place in about three sentences. Like, instead of, before I would walk away from it. But now I just stand there and fight . . . I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing.*

Teaching Note: Break up the class in groups of three or four students each. Ask them to discuss the questions and share their answers later as a class. ■

### Questions

1. Do you think Laura is justified in her responses to her organization's culture? Why or why not?  
**Answer:** Most students would agree. The culture encourages and fosters the type of behavior and responses provided by Laura. There appears to be a disconnect, however, between Laura's true feelings and the organizational culture.
2. Do you think Laura's strategic use and display of emotions serve to protect her?  
**Answer:** Yes. The organization's culture is hostile and not conducive to open displays of emotion. Therefore, Laura's selective use of specific emotions serves her well.
3. Assuming Laura's description is accurate, how would *you* react to the organization's culture?  
**Answer:** Students will provide a range of different perspectives. Most, however, would state that they would quit.
4. Research shows that acts of coworkers (37 percent) and management (22 percent) cause more negative emotions for employees than do acts of customers (7percent). What can Laura's company do to change its emotional climate?  
**Answer:** Cultural overhaul is indicated here. It would probably be best to change the management structure and personnel. Bring in a CEO and a management team that create and foster a fundamentally different approach. Transforming this organization's culture would take a considerable amount of time.

Source: J. Perrone and M. H. Vickers, "Emotions as Strategic Game in a Hostile Workplace: An Exemplar Case," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004), pp. 167–78.

## Case Incident 2

### Becoming a Facial Decoder

We mentioned previously that some researchers—the psychologist Paul Ekman is the best known—have studied whether facial expressions reveal true emotions. These researchers have distinguished real smiles (so-called Duchenne smiles, named after French physician Guillaume Duchenne) from “fake” smiles. Duchenne found genuine smiles raised not only the corners of the mouth (easily faked) but also cheek and eye muscles (much more difficult to fake). So, one way to determine whether someone is genuinely happy or amused is to look at the muscles around the upper cheeks and eyes—if the person’s eyes are smiling or twinkling, the smile is genuine. Ekman and his associates have developed similar methods to detect other emotions, such as anger, disgust, and distress. They call their method Facial Action Coding System (FACS). According to Ekman, the key to identifying real emotions is to focus on micro-expressions, or those facial muscles we cannot easily manipulate.

Dan Hill has used FACS to study the facial expressions of CEOs and found they vary dramatically not only in their Duchenne smiles but also in the degree to which they display positive versus negative facial expressions. Below is Hill’s analysis of the facial expressions of some prominent executives:

Jeff Bezos, Amazon	51% positive
Warren Buffet, Berkshire Hathaway	69% positive
Michael Dell, Dell Computers	47% positive
Larry Ellison, Oracle	0% positive
Bill Gates, Microsoft	73% positive
Steve Jobs, Apple	48% positive
Phil Knight, Nike	67% positive
Donald Trump, The Trump Organization	16% positive

#### Questions

1. Most research suggests we are not very good at detecting lying, and we think we’re much better than we are. Do you believe FACS would improve your ability to detect lying in others?

**Answer:** Actually studying the variability of meanings encoded into facial expressions could improve the ability to detect a number of psychological and emotional responses among those we observe.

2. Do you think the information in this case could help you tell whether someone’s smile is genuine?

**Answer:** The suggestions about the physical characteristics of real smiles and fake smiles can be put into practice to “read” the underlying emotions of the persons being observed. The concepts, however, will require a great deal of practice in known situations to ensure proper and accurate interpretation.

3. Is your impression of the facial expressions of the eight business leaders consistent with what the researcher found? If not, why do you think your views might be at odds with his?

**Answer:** Response to this question will depend on the student's interpretation of his or her physical characteristics in smiling.

4. One research study found people's ratings of the positive affect displayed in CEOs' faces had very little correlation to their company's profits. Does that suggest to you that Hill's analysis is immaterial?

**Answer:** No, it doesn't. Although no correlation was found between these characteristics and profitability, the firm's environment is much more than merely focusing on profitability. Previously we have discussed leadership, trust, and other needed capabilities of effective leaders. The abilities represented by training to read underlying emotions can contribute greatly to a leader's charisma or transactional leadership.

5. Assuming you could become better at detecting the real emotions in facial expressions, do you think it would help your career? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Yes, it would. Being able to "read" people in a firm will provide insight to contribute to greater organizational success and greater likelihood of being thought of as a good leader.

*Source:* Based on P. Ekman, *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009); D. Jones, "It's Written All Over Their Faces," *USA Today* (February 25, 2008), pp. 1B-2B; and N. O. Rule and N. Ambady, "The Face of Success," *Psychological Science* 19, no. 2 (2008), pp. 109-111.

# Instructor's Choice

## Promoting Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Begin this exercise by reinforcing the definition or description of what organizational citizenship behavior is and what it is not. The voluntary aspect of the term is important. Students should be sure to describe the behavior itself, not just the end result of the behavior. For example, "people were helped" is not as clear as describing exactly how a specific person(s) was (were) helped. Students must also be able to separate this type of behavior from normal duties. For example, a receptionist or greeter might normally "go the extra mile" to show someone where they need to go (a greeter walks someone across campus to the exact building referenced instead of showing the party a map) because of the general atmosphere or culture of the organization. In other words, there might be degrees of organizational citizenship behavior. Students should be looking for exceptional behavior. Oftentimes group discussion will reveal these actions from presented examples. Lastly, as students compile their lists of managerial steps to promote organizational citizenship behavior, have them reference the section in the chapter that deals with this form of behavior to find examples that will reveal some potential steps.



### EXPLORING OB TOPICS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Search Engines are our navigational tool to explore the WWW. Some commonly used search engines are:

[www.goto.com](http://www.goto.com)  
[www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com)

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)  
[www.hotbot.com](http://www.hotbot.com)

[www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)  
[www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)

1. Learn more about yourself! Go to [www.2h.com/personality-tests.html](http://www.2h.com/personality-tests.html). There you will find a variety of personality tests such as "Are you a Type A?" the "Stress O Meter," and other IQ and personality tests. Most are free and often fun to take. Take two or three of your choice. Print the results you get on yourself and bring them to class where we will discuss the validity of your findings.
2. What is EQ? Visit the Internet's leading site on EQ. Here you will find a wide variety of resources to assist you in researching this interesting topic. Visit <http://www.eq.org>

Bring five new facts you learned from at least two of the above sites to class for a group discussion.

